



U. S. Department of Agriculture  
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Wisconsin Field Office  
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# 2008 ORGANIC PRODUCTION SURVEY

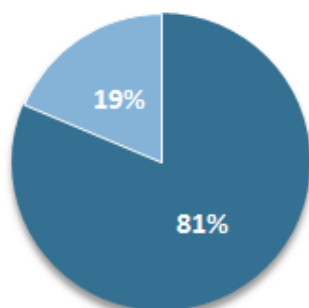
## Wisconsin

**Wisconsin has 8 percent of the nation's certified and exempt organic farms. The top 10 states were:**

1. California with 2,714
2. Wisconsin with 1,222
3. Washington with 887
4. New York with 827
5. Oregon with 657
6. Pennsylvania with 586
7. Minnesota with 550
8. Ohio with 547
9. Iowa with 518
10. Vermont with 467

**Wisconsin had 994 USDA-certified farms, and 228 organic farms exempt from certification.**

### WI Organic Farm Certification Status



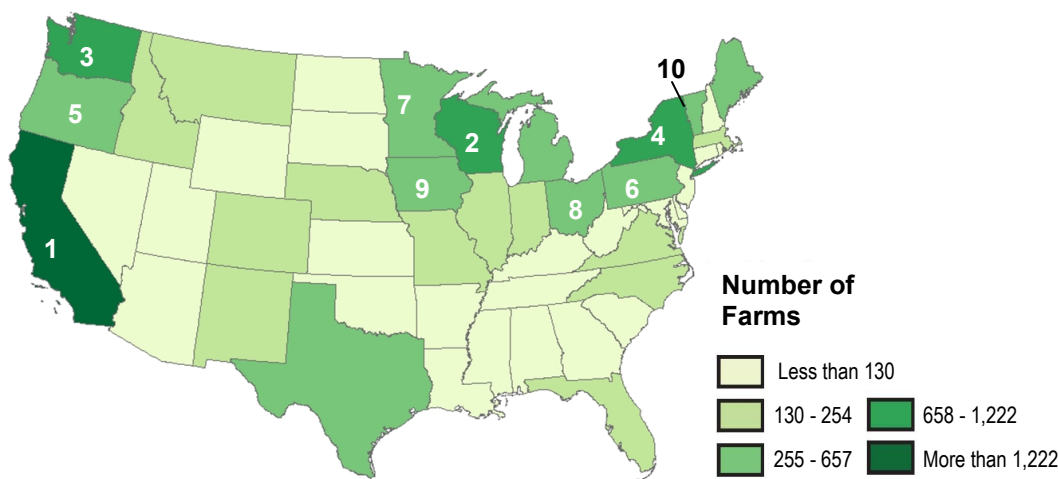
- USDA Certified
- Exempt from Certification\*

\*Farms following the USDA's National Organic Program Standards with less than \$5,000 in sales are allowed to market their products as organic without becoming certified.

As a follow-on to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducted the U.S. Department of Agriculture's first in-depth survey of organic farming in the United States. NASS collected 2008 data from operators of farms that were either USDA-certified organic, were making the transition to organic production, or were exempt from certification because of sales totaling less than \$5,000.\* Farms following the USDA's National Organic Program Standards that had sales over \$5,000 but did not become certified were excluded from this report.

The 2008 Organic Production Survey counted 14,540 organic farms and ranches in the United States, comprising 4.1 million acres of land. Of those farms, 10,903 were USDA-certified and 3,637 were exempt from certification.

### Certified and Exempt Organic Farms, 2008



### Wisconsin Ranking Among States

Wisconsin was one of the top ranking states for number of organic farms and value of organic sales for many categories of production.

	Wisconsin's Rank		Wisconsin's Rank
Number of Farms	2	Cranberry Sales	1
Farms with Milk Production	1	Milk Cow Inventory	2
Farms Producing Chicken Eggs	1	Chicken Egg Sales	4
Farms with Vegetable Sales	3	Goat Milk Sales	2
Farms with Potato Production	2	Potato Sales	7
Farms with Beef Cows	1	Beef Cow Sales	1
Farms Producing Corn for Grain	1	Corn For Grain Sales	6

# 2008 ORGANIC PRODUCTION SURVEY



**Wisconsin organic farms are smaller, on average, than all Wisconsin farms. Organic farms average 160 acres of land, compared to 195 acres for all farms.**

**Wisconsin organic farms had average annual sales of \$115,247, smaller than the U.S. average, of \$229,747.**

**Most sales are local. For first point-of-sales, fifty-six percent of organic sales occurred within 100 miles from the farm.**



## Wisconsin Organic Farm Size

Although Wisconsin is number two in number of organic farms, those farms are smaller in average sales per farm compared to the other major organic states, making Wisconsin just sixth in total organic sales.

Top 6 States, by 2008 Organic Sales	Average Sales Per Farm	Total Organic Sales
California	\$445,213	\$1,148,650,000
Washington	\$327,111	\$281,970,000
Pennsylvania	\$386,096	\$212,739,000
Oregon	\$244,290	\$155,613,000
Texas	\$448,432	\$149,328,000
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>\$115,247</b>	<b>\$132,764,000</b>

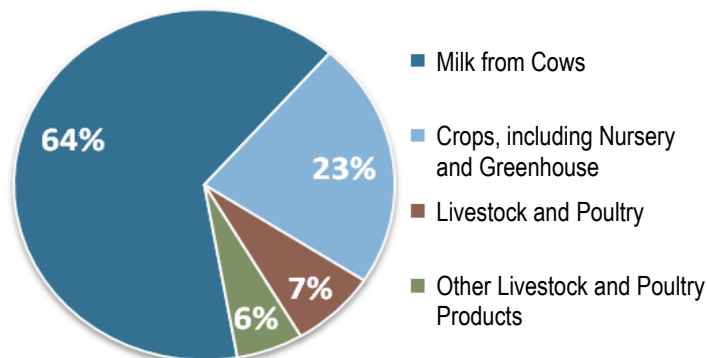
## Wisconsin Organic Sales

Wisconsin organic sales totaled \$132.8 million, including \$30.1 million in crops sales and \$102.6 million in sales of livestock, poultry and their products. Average sales were \$115,247 per farm.

Sixty-four percent, or \$85.1 million dollars of total organic sales in Wisconsin were from milk from cows.

Crop sales include over \$18.1 million from field crops, \$6.54 million from vegetables, \$282 thousand from fruits, and \$2.69 million from berries, of which \$2.37 million was from cranberries.

### Percent of Total Organic Sales, Wisconsin, 2008



Total 2008 Sales: \$132,764,000

## Top Wisconsin Organic Sales, by Category, 2008

Livestock & Livestock Products		Field Crops		Fruits, Berries, & Vegetables	
	Sales		Sales		Sales
1 Milk from Cows	\$85,143,556	Corn for grain	\$7,372,031	Vegetables, other	\$3,249,133
2 Chicken Eggs	\$7,503,408	Hay	\$3,473,933	Cranberries	\$2,365,988
3 Cattle and Calves*	\$4,974,345	Soybeans	\$2,974,380	Potatoes	\$662,855
4 Milk Cows	\$3,182,616	Haylage	\$1,620,293	Tomatoes	\$405,727
5 Beef Cows	\$475,618	Winter Wheat	\$775,441	Squash, all types	\$293,811

\*This category includes organic bulls, beef calves, replacement milk heifers, etc.

## Organic Expenses

U.S. organic farms incurred production expenses totaling \$2.5 billion, or an average of \$171,978 per farm in 2008. Total expenses for Wisconsin's organic farms was \$94.4 million, for an average of \$77,670 per farm. Nationally, labor was the largest expense category. In Wisconsin, feed purchased was the largest expense category, followed by labor, and repairs, supplies and maintenance.

## Organic Marketing Practices

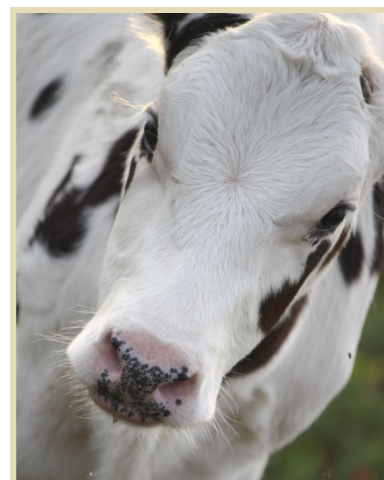
Contrary to popular belief, only a small percentage of organic sales are direct to consumer. In Wisconsin just 6 percent of sales were direct to consumers, via farm stands, farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), and other arrangements, while over 75 percent of Wisconsin organic sales were to wholesale channels, including processors, millers and packers, and grower cooperatives. Just over 4 percent of Wisconsin sales were direct-to-retail buyers such as natural food stores, supermarkets, and restaurants.

Selected Sales Outlets	Number of Farms		Percent of Sales	
	WI	U.S.	WI	U.S.
Farm Stand	201	3,381	2.0	2.4
Farmers Market	134	2,609	1.0	1.9
Community Supported Agriculture	57	906	1.6	1.0
Processor, Mill, Packer	266	2,728	33.5	28.7
Grower Cooperative	251	1,072	34.0	9.8
Direct to Natural Food Stores	94	1,721	2.3	3.5

## Organic Production Practices

Farmers and ranchers reported using a variety of conservation and environmental practices on their certified or exempt operations in 2008. Among the most popular were the use of green or animal manures, and the planting of buffer strips.

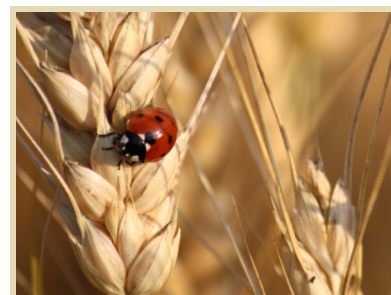
	Number of Farms		Percent of Farms	
	WI	U.S.	WI	U.S.
Used Green or Animal Manures	943	9,454	77.2	65.0
Used Buffer Strips	863	8,423	70.6	57.9
Practiced Rotational Grazing	512	3,110	41.9	21.4
Used Organic Mulch or Compost	456	7,454	37.3	51.3
Selected Planting Locations to Avoid Pests	384	5,133	31.4	35.3
Used Water Management Practices	381	7,372	31.2	50.7
Used No-Till or Minimum-Till	377	5,542	30.9	38.1
Planned Plantings to Avoid Cross-Contamination	346	3,768	28.3	25.9
Chose Pest-Resistant Varieties	337	4,760	27.6	32.7
Practiced Free-Range Livestock Production	315	2,315	25.8	15.9
Practiced Biological Pest Management	227	4,474	18.6	30.8



**Wisconsin had 24 percent of the nation's organic dairy farms, and produced 12 percent of the country's organic milk in 2008.**

**Wisconsin farmers received an average of 25.9 cents per pound for organic milk in 2008, 7 cents higher than the state average for all milk types.**

**In 2008 Wisconsin had 168 farms in the process of transitioning 5,591 more acres of cropland to organic production.**

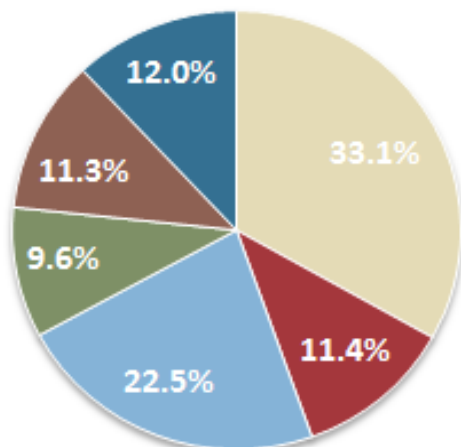




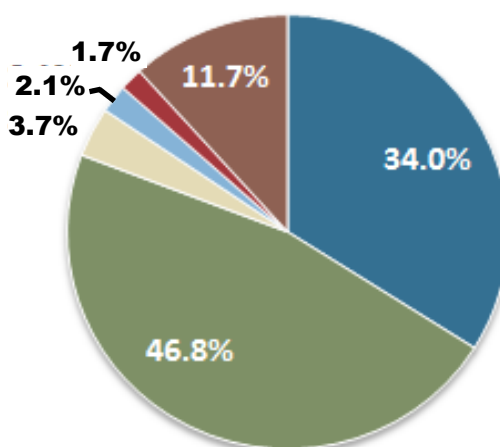
## Organic Production Challenges and Future Organic Plans

Survey respondents indicated that they face various challenges, including regulatory, production, management, and marketing issues. Despite these challenges, more than 80 percent of Wisconsin producers indicated that they plan to maintain or increase their organic production over the next five years.

**Primary Organic Production Challenge**



**Five-Year Organic Production Intentions**



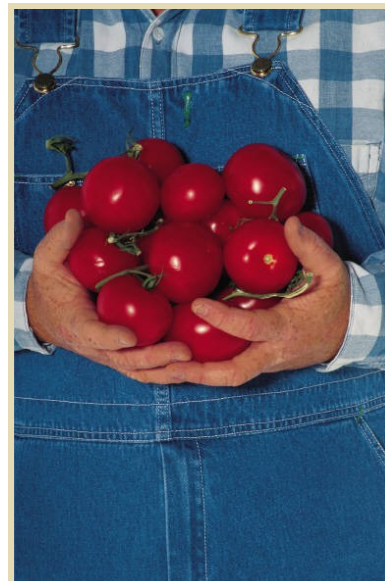
Regulatory Problems  
Production Problems  
Management Issues

Price Issues  
Market Access  
Any Other Challenge

Increase Production  
Decrease Production  
Discontinue All Agriculture

Maintain Production  
Discontinue Production  
Don't Know

**To Wisconsin Organic Producers:** This report contains a brief summary of the data collected from the 2008 Organic Production Survey, a follow-on survey to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. We appreciate your assistance in providing timely and accurate data on this growing industry. Thank you for your support.



The complete, 331 page, report can be found online at:  
[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).



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